

FROM CONTAMINATED LAND TO VALUED OPEN SPACE

EPA REGION 10 BROWNFIELDS ASSISTANCE

AK, ID, OR, WA



EPA 910-F-05-005



OPEN SPACE



Fast Facts:

Region 10 includes Alaska, Washington, Idaho, and Oregon.

Brownfield: (broun'feld) n. Real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Why Cleanup Brownfields?

- It is estimated that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties:

- increases local tax bases
- facilitates job growth
- utilizes existing infrastructure
- takes development pressures off of undeveloped, open land
- improves and protects the environment

Contact us:

Visit our website at
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>, or
call the Region 10 office in
Seattle:
800-424-4EPA,
(Local)
206-553-1200

Community leaders can often craft creative uses for contaminated open space sites, if provided the resources. The EPA Brownfields Program was founded on the belief that cleaning up properties for reuse invigorates local economies, preserves green space, and prevents sprawl. EPA staff in Region 10 work with federal, state, tribal, public, and private partners to help local decision-makers restore land for a variety of uses. Project leaders find that EPA Brownfields assistance can come in many forms, including help to **enlist state assistance**, freeing up land for **beneficial reuse**, and **providing technical assistance** for assessment and cleanup.

Enlisting State Assistance—Historic Bayhorse Mining District, Idaho

State partners often work together with EPA Brownfields staff to target sites for cleanup and assessment. The Historic Bayhorse Mining District caught the eye of staff at the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) as a possible purchase, but they were concerned with the environmental risks posed by former mining activities. They proposed the site to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality



Payette River, Idaho



Snohomish Trail, Washington

(IDEQ) as a potential candidate for an environmental assessment.

- A joint EPA and IDEQ funding program allowed IDEQ to conduct a Site Specific Assessment. The assessment convinced IDEQ staff that the mining district was a priority site.
- Once on board, IDEQ recommended and funded more detailed site investigations before Parks' bought the site.
- Park leaders worked closely with IDEQ to ensure their plan to make a historic park minimized the environmental risks identified in the investigations.

Beneficial Reuse—Snohomish Trail Corridor, Washington

A key criterion for any Brownfields site is that it has potential for redevelopment. City leaders saw potential where an abandoned railroad line intersected with a proposed bike trail in the Seattle metropolitan region. With open space at such a premium, they wanted to run a similar bike trail down the length of the old railroad line but feared the soil was contaminated.

- City officials had already invested in one bike route and wanted to increase the benefit by connecting it to an existing trail system.
- As part of the Targeted Brownfields Assessment program, the county was able to demonstrate that the soils along the line were not a health or environmental hazard, and construction could move forward.
- What was once an awkward but valuable parcel of public land can now serve as a recreational bike path.

Providing Technical Assistance—McCall, Idaho

Many communities may not have experience redeveloping a contaminated site, and EPA staff can provide expert technical assistance to help guide grantees through the complex process of environmental assessment and cleanup. For over 20 years in McCall, Idaho, a city-owned parcel along the bank of the Payette River served as the local landfill. Potential environmental hazards kept the city from moving forward with any plans to reuse the site. McCall lacked any public space with recreational facilities, and the City's Park and Recreation Department sought help restoring the site.

- EPA staff met with Parks leaders to discuss their plans for the site, and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) stepped in to help guide them through the grant application process.
- EPA performed the first assessment through its Targeted Brownfields Assessment program, and then IDEQ's site specific Assessment

program funded the second half.

- This collaborative effort produced a great end result. No contamination was found, and the project is moving forward with design plans.

Leveraging Other Sources—Gorst Creek Estuary, Washington

EPA Brownfields assistance works best when it is the lynchpin that galvanizes other stakeholders and partners into action. A cluster of contaminated properties along the Sinclair Inlet shoreline provided the perfect opportunity to jumpstart a habitat restoration project with a Brownfields assessment grant. Contaminated waterfront areas such as the Evergreen Auto Wrecking site were being considered for restoration funding from the Salmon Recovery Fund because they threatened native salmon habitat, but they needed an assessment first.

- The wrecking site served as the 'anchor project', and stakeholders developed a coordinated plan to address the actual habitat restoration.
- County leaders moved quickly to mobilize funding, securing other grants to support cleanup and negotiating with landowners to swap their waterfront property for other County-owned property.
- The assessment stimulated a much larger community restoration project, which reclaimed over 200 acres of the shoreline for recreational activities and economic development.
- The restored shoreline added value to other adjacent creek restorations, improved native habitat, and made way for a new recreation trail along the shoreline.



Gorst Creek Estuary, Washington

Grant Funding:

Brownfields grants serve as the foundation of EPA's Brownfields Program. There are four types of competitive grants: assessment grants, cleanup grants, cleanup revolving loan fund grants, and job training grants. In addition to direct Brownfields funding, EPA also provides a variety of assistance. This could include an initial environment assessment of the property, assistance with community involvement, and help with cleanup and redevelopment planning. Past recipients of Brownfields funding include tribes, non-profit organizations, local governments, development agencies, states and coalitions.

For competitive grants, applicants are encouraged to review the guidelines and to participate in one of the grant training opportunities that are held region-wide in the fall. Applications are generally due in November each year.